8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It finds a formula for them that gives them a familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-